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CIA releases psychic experiment documents

"Stranger Things" got it wrong. It was the CIA and the Department of Defense, not the Department of Energy, that conducted covert research on potential psychic abilities.

Bonnie Burton Jan. 20, 2017 8:13 a.m. PT

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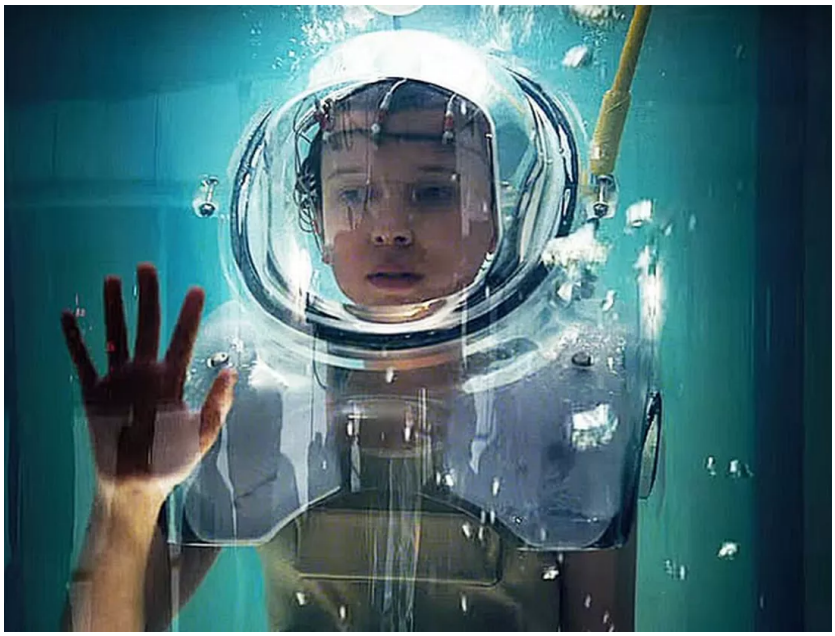

"Stranger Things" portrays psychic experiments on the character known as Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown).
Netflix

The dubious, fictional experiments run by the Department of Energy in "Stranger Things" may have actually been conducted in real life by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

Among the millions of declassified documents that the CIA uploaded to its site this week, quite a few reveal information about the Stargate Project, a $20 million secret program that started in the mid-1970s to try to develop psychic abilities in agents and military personnel.

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The program worked under various code names such as Gondola Wish, Grill Flame, Center Lane, Sun Streak and Scanate. It focused on remote viewing, which involves someone known as a remote viewer seeing an object, person or place from a great distance with one's mind or via an out-of-body experience.

According to one of the declassified documents uploaded to the CIA site, the Stargate Project at one time consisted of an activity chief, a senior intelligence officer, three operational remote viewers, an intelligence technician and a secretary. The project's sole purpose was to test remote viewing methodologies. Even the participant consent form for Stargate seems ominous, reminding the participant that the "potential for injury during some training cannot be conclusively ruled out."

The project apparently proved to be fruitless, and the CIA closed down the Stargate Project in 1995.

This isn't the first time the CIA has uploaded unusual files to its website. Last year, the CIA uploaded over 1,700 declassified UFO reports.

"The declassification of 25-year-old records is mandated by Executive Order 13526, which requires agencies to review all such records categorized as permanent under the Federal Records Act for declassification," according to a statement released Tuesday by the CIA. "As a result, following CIA's review, documents are regularly added to this collection."

Approximately 930,000 documents -- that's 12 million pages -- are now available in the CIA's Electronic Reading Room on its website. At least we have a way to pass the time while we wait for new episodes of "The X-Files."

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